

MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION (EXCERPT)
Act 3 of 1939

***** 460.6a THIS SECTION IS AMENDED EFFECTIVE APRIL 20, 2017: See 460.6a.amended *****

460.6a Gas or electric utility; completed petition or application to increase rates and charges or to amend rate or rate schedules; notice and hearing; issuance of temporary order; refund; interest; automatic fuel or purchased gas adjustment clause; rules and procedures; adjustment clauses operating without notice and hearing abolished; separate hearing to determine cost of fuel, purchased gas, or purchased power; recovery of cost; definitions; final decision; filing time extension; approval of transportation rate schedules or transportation contracts; forms and instructions; recovery of amount by merchant plant; limitation; adjustment; "United States consumer price index" defined; orders to permit recovery under subsections (7) and (8).

Sec. 6a. (1) A gas or electric utility shall not increase its rates and charges or alter, change, or amend any rate or rate schedules, the effect of which will be to increase the cost of services to its customers, without first receiving commission approval as provided in this section. The utility shall place in evidence facts relied upon to support the utility's petition or application to increase its rates and charges, or to alter, change, or amend any rate or rate schedules. The commission shall require notice to be given to all interested parties within the service area to be affected, and all interested parties shall have a reasonable opportunity for a full and complete hearing. A utility may use projected costs and revenues for a future consecutive 12-month period in developing its requested rates and charges. The commission shall notify the utility within 30 days of filing, whether the utility's petition or application is complete. A petition or application is considered complete if it complies with the rate application filing forms and instructions adopted under subsection (6). A petition or application pending before the commission prior to the adoption of filing forms and instructions pursuant to subsection (6) shall be evaluated based upon the filing requirements in effect at the time the petition or application was filed. If the application is not complete, the commission shall notify the utility of all information necessary to make that filing complete. If the commission has not notified the utility within 30 days of whether the utility's petition or application is complete, the application is considered complete. If the commission has not issued an order within 180 days of the filing of a complete application, the utility may implement up to the amount of the proposed annual rate request through equal percentage increases or decreases applied to all base rates. For a petition or application pending before the commission prior to the effective date of the amendatory act that added this sentence, the 180-day period commences on the effective date of the amendatory act that added this sentence. If the utility uses projected costs and revenues for a future period in developing its requested rates and charges, the utility may not implement the equal percentage increases or decreases prior to the calendar date corresponding to the start of the projected 12-month period. For good cause, the commission may issue a temporary order preventing or delaying a utility from implementing its proposed rates or charges. If a utility implements increased rates or charges under this subsection before the commission issues a final order, that utility shall refund to customers, with interest, any portion of the total revenues collected through application of the equal percentage increase that exceed the total that would have been produced by the rates or charges subsequently ordered by the commission in its final order. The commission shall allocate any refund required by this section among primary customers based upon their pro rata share of the total revenue collected through the applicable increase, and among secondary and residential customers in a manner to be determined by the commission. The rate of interest for refunds shall equal 5% plus the London interbank offered rate (LIBOR) for the appropriate time period. For any portion of the refund which, exclusive of interest, exceeds 25% of the annual revenue increase awarded by the commission in its final order, the rate of interest shall be the authorized rate of return on the common stock of the utility during the appropriate period. Any refund or interest awarded under this subsection shall not be included, in whole or in part, in any application for a rate increase by a utility. Nothing in this section impairs the commission's ability to issue a show cause order as part of its rate-making authority. An alteration or amendment in rates or rate schedules applied for by a public utility that will not result in an increase in the cost of service to its customers may be authorized and approved without notice or hearing. There shall be no increase in rates based upon changes in cost of fuel or purchased gas unless notice has been given within the service area to be affected, and there has been an opportunity for a full and complete hearing on the cost of the fuel or purchased gas. The rates charged by any utility pursuant to an automatic fuel or purchased gas adjustment clause shall not be altered, changed, or amended unless notice has been given within the service area to be affected, and there has been an opportunity for a full and complete hearing on the cost of the fuel or

purchased gas.

(2) The commission shall adopt rules and procedures for the filing, investigation, and hearing of petitions or applications to increase or decrease utility rates and charges as the commission finds necessary or appropriate to enable it to reach a final decision with respect to petitions or applications within a period of 12 months from the filing of the complete petitions or applications. The commission shall not authorize or approve adjustment clauses that operate without notice and an opportunity for a full and complete hearing, and all such clauses shall be abolished. The commission may hold a full and complete hearing to determine the cost of fuel, purchased gas, or purchased power separately from a full and complete hearing on a general rate case and may be held concurrently with the general rate case. The commission shall authorize a utility to recover the cost of fuel, purchased gas, or purchased power only to the extent that the purchases are reasonable and prudent. As used in this section:

(a) "Full and complete hearing" means a hearing that provides interested parties a reasonable opportunity to present and cross-examine evidence and present arguments relevant to the specific element or elements of the request that are the subject of the hearing.

(b) "General rate case" means a proceeding initiated by a utility in an application filed with the commission that alleges a revenue deficiency and requests an increase in the schedule of rates or charges based on the utility's total cost of providing service.

(3) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, if the commission fails to reach a final decision with respect to a completed petition or application to increase or decrease utility rates within the 12-month period following the filing of the completed petition or application, the petition or application is considered approved. If a utility makes any significant amendment to its filing, the commission has an additional 12 months from the date of the amendment to reach a final decision on the petition or application. If the utility files for an extension of time, the commission shall extend the 12-month period by the amount of additional time requested by the utility.

(4) A utility shall not file a general rate case application for an increase in rates earlier than 12 months after the date of the filing of a complete prior general rate case application. A utility may not file a new general rate case application until the commission has issued a final order on a prior general rate case or until the rates are approved under subsection (3).

(5) The commission shall, if requested by a gas utility, establish load retention transportation rate schedules or approve gas transportation contracts as required for the purpose of retaining industrial or commercial customers whose individual annual transportation volumes exceed 500,000 decatherms on the gas utility's system. The commission shall approve these rate schedules or approve transportation contracts entered into by the utility in good faith if the industrial or commercial customer has the installed capability to use an alternative fuel or otherwise has a viable alternative to receiving natural gas transportation service from the utility, the customer can obtain the alternative fuel or gas transportation from an alternative source at a price which would cause them to cease using the gas utility's system, and the customer, as a result of their use of the system and receipt of transportation service, makes a significant contribution to the utility's fixed costs. The commission shall adopt accounting and rate-making policies to ensure that the discounts associated with the transportation rate schedules and contracts are recovered by the gas utility through charges applicable to other customers if the incremental costs related to the discounts are no greater than the costs that would be passed on to those customers as the result of a loss of the industrial or commercial customer's contribution to a utility's fixed costs.

(6) Within 90 days of the effective date of the amendatory act that added this subsection, the commission shall adopt standard rate application filing forms and instructions for use in all general rate cases filed by utilities whose rates are regulated by the commission. For cooperative electric utilities whose rates are regulated by the commission, in addition to rate applications filed under this section, the commission shall continue to allow for rate filings based on the cooperative's times interest earned ratio. The commission may, in its discretion, modify the standard rate application forms and instructions adopted under this subsection.

(7) If, on or before January 1, 2008, a merchant plant entered into a contract with an initial term of 20 years or more to sell electricity to an electric utility whose rates are regulated by the commission with 1,000,000 or more retail customers in this state and if, prior to January 1, 2008, the merchant plant generated electricity under that contract, in whole or in part, from wood or solid wood wastes, then the merchant plant shall, upon petition by the merchant plant, and subject to the limitation set forth in subsection (8), recover the amount, if any, by which the merchant plant's reasonably and prudently incurred actual fuel and variable operation and maintenance costs exceed the amount that the merchant plant is paid under the contract for those costs. This subsection does not apply to landfill gas plants, hydro plants, municipal solid waste plants, or to merchant plants engaged in litigation against an electric utility seeking higher payments for power delivered pursuant to contract.

(8) The total aggregate additional amounts recoverable by merchant plants pursuant to subsection (7) in excess of the amounts paid under the contracts shall not exceed \$1,000,000.00 per month for each affected electric utility. The \$1,000,000.00 per month limit specified in this subsection shall be reviewed by the commission upon petition of the merchant plant filed no more than once per year and may be adjusted if the commission finds that the eligible merchant plants reasonably and prudently incurred actual fuel and variable operation and maintenance costs exceed the amount that those merchant plants are paid under the contract by more than \$1,000,000.00 per month. The annual amount of the adjustments shall not exceed a rate equal to the United States consumer price index. An adjustment shall not be made by the commission unless each affected merchant plant files a petition with the commission. As used in this subsection, "United States consumer price index" means the United States consumer price index for all urban consumers as defined and reported by the United States department of labor, bureau of labor statistics. If the total aggregate amount by which the eligible merchant plants reasonably and prudently incurred actual fuel and variable operation and maintenance costs determined by the commission exceed the amount that the merchant plants are paid under the contract by more than \$1,000,000.00 per month, the commission shall allocate the additional \$1,000,000.00 per month payment among the eligible merchant plants based upon the relationship of excess costs among the eligible merchant plants. The \$1,000,000.00 limit specified in this subsection, as adjusted, shall not apply with respect to actual fuel and variable operation and maintenance costs that are incurred due to changes in federal or state environmental laws or regulations that are implemented after the effective date of the amendatory act that added this subsection. The \$1,000,000.00 per month payment limit under this subsection shall not apply to merchant plants eligible under subsection (7) whose electricity is purchased by a utility that is using wood or wood waste or fuels derived from those materials for fuel in their power plants.

(9) The commission shall issue orders to permit the recovery authorized under subsections (7) and (8) upon petition of the merchant plant. The merchant plant shall not be required to alter or amend the existing contract with the electric utility in order to obtain the recovery under subsections (7) and (8). The commission shall permit or require the electric utility whose rates are regulated by the commission to recover from its ratepayers all fuel and variable operation and maintenance costs that the electric utility is required to pay to the merchant plant as reasonably and prudently incurred costs.

History: Add. 1952, Act 243, Eff. Sept. 18, 1952;—Am. 1955, Act 172, Imd. Eff. June 13, 1955;—Am. 1972, Act 300, Imd. Eff. Dec. 19, 1972;—Am. 1982, Act 304, Imd. Eff. Oct. 13, 1982;—Am. 1982, Initiated Law, Eff. Dec. 2, 1982;—Am. 1982, Act 212, Eff. Nov. 22, 1982;—Am. 1992, Act 37, Imd. Eff. Apr. 21, 1992;—Am. 2008, Act 286, Imd. Eff. Oct. 6, 2008.

Constitutionality: In In re Proposals D & H (Michigan State Chamber of Commerce v. State of Michigan), 417 Mich 409 (1983), the Michigan Supreme Court held that Proposal H (Act 212 of 1982) prevails in its entirety over Proposal D. The Court declared further that Proposal H was not repealed by the enactment of Act 304 of 1982.